REMARKS

Claims 1-33 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5-7, 12, 16-18, 23 and 27-29 are amended. These amendments are supported by Applicant's specification at least at, page 38, lines 5-11, page 38, lines 12-21 and Fig. 16. Claims 4, 15 and 26 are amended for clarity. No new matter is added. A Request for Continued Examination is attached. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-33 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,835,096 to Baldwin further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,599,194 to Smith et al. (hereinafter "Smith"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Without conceding the appropriateness of the rejection, and solely to advance prosecution of this application, claims 1, 7, 12, 18, 23 and 29 are further amended. The combination of Baldwin with Smith would not have suggested the combinations all of the features recited in these claims for at least the following reasons.

The Office Action concedes that Baldwin does not teach the use of his system with a game system. The Office Action asserts that Smith remedies this shortfall of Baldwin. Applicants disagree.

Claims 1, 12 and 23 recite, among other features, when the depth value is within a predetermined range, the depth value is transformed into the second depth value, and, when the depth value is outside of the predetermined range, the depth value is transformed into the alternative second depth value, the predetermined range includes a depth value of a focus position of a virtual camera, and a number of threshold steps of the second depth value is greater than a number of threshold steps of the alternative second depth value.

Claims 7, 18 and 29 recite, among other features, when a depth value, which is one of the image information, is within a predetermined range, the image information is transformed into the second image information and, when a depth value, which is one of the image information, is outside of the predetermined range, the image information is transformed into the alternative second image information, the predetermined range includes a depth value of a focus position of a virtual camera, and a number of threshold steps of the second image information is greater than a number of threshold steps of the alternative second image information.

Baldwin teaches at col. 24, lines 63-67 "[t]he GID, FrameCount, Stencil and Depth fields in the local buffer are converted into the internal format by right justification if they are less than their internal widths, i.e. the unused bits are the most significant bits and they are set to 0." However, Baldwin would not have suggested that any means that transforms a depth value within a predetermined range into a second depth value, and transforms a depth value outside of the predetermined range into an alternative second depth value. Baldwin does not suggest any predetermined range. Further, Baldwin does not suggest any alternative second depth value. For example, in Applicants' Fig. 16, a 4-step threshold may be set for values within a range while a 1-step threshold may be set for values outside the range. This not only can reduce the amount of information, but also may increase resolution density when within the range. This is not appreciated in Baldwin. Thus, Baldwin does not consider use of threshold steps after dropping unused bits. Similarly, Baldwin does not suggest when a depth value which is one of the image information is within a predetermined range, the image information is transformed into the second image information and, when a depth value which is one of the image information is outside of the predetermined range, the image information

is transformed into the alternative second image information, as recited in claims 7, 18 and 29.

Moreover, Baldwin teaches at col. 6, lines 65-67 "depth (Z) buffer: A memory buffer containing the depth component of a pixel, used to, for example, eliminate hidden surfaces." However, Baldwin would not have suggested the predetermined range includes a depth value of a focus position of a virtual camera, as recited in claims 1, 7, 12, 18, 23 and 29. Baldwin merely teaches to eliminate hidden surfaces and would not have suggested a focus position of a virtual camera. Smith, as applied to claims 1, 7, 12, 18, 23 and 29, does not remedy these shortfalls of Baldwin.

In view of the above, the combination of Baldwin with Smith cannot reasonably be considered to have suggested the combinations of all of the features positively recited in claims 1, 7, 12, 18, 23, and 29. Further, Baldwin cannot reasonably be considered to have suggested the combinations of all of the features recited in claims 2-6, 8-11, 13-17, 19-22, 24-28 and 30-33 for at least the dependence of these claims on allowable base claims, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-33 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Baldwin further in view of Smith are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-33 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Daniel A. Tanner, III
Registration No. 54,734

JAO:MIL/add

Attachments:
Request for Continued Examination
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: November 7, 2008

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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